

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 IO-13 INR-10 SP-02 PM-05
EB-08 L-03 PA-01 H-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 /071 W
-----045062 250849Z /20
O 250530Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2493

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6500

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, PEPR, KS, US
SUBJECT: COMBINED FORCES COMMAND -- LEVEL OF APPROVAL
R

REF: SEOUL 5892

1. WHILE MOFA HAS NOT FOLLOWED UP ON LINE OF INQUIRY REPORTED REFTEL, BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT SENIOR LEVELS OF DEPARTMENT REVIEW COMBINED FORCES COMMAND (CFC) STRUCTURE TO ASSURE THAT PROPER PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHMENT ARE BEING FOLLOWED. AT PRESENT PLAN CALLS FOR FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT OF CFC TO BE APPROVED BY RESPECTIVE CHAIRMEN OF JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF AT A MILITARY COMMITTEE MEETING JULY 28, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE JULY 26-27 SESSION OF THE SCM.

2. IN REVIEWING THE ESTABLISHMENT PROCEDURES FOR THE SCM, THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) UNLIKE THE UN COMMAND, HERE THE CINCUNC RETAINS COMMAND WHETHER HE IS IN KOREA OR TRAVELING, COMMAND OF THE CFC DEVOLVES TO THE DEPUTY COMMAFDEJ, A KOREAN FOUR-STAR, IN THE EVENT THAT THE CINCCFC IS OUTSIDE KOREA. THUS THE DEPUTY WAS IN CHARGE DURING THE FINAL PHASE OF ULCHI FOCUS LENS WHEN
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THE COMMANDER, GENERAL VESSEY, WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

(B) AS PRESENTLY STRUCTURED, CFC WILL HAVE OPCON OF ALL ROK FORCES. MAJOR U.S. FORCE OPCON WILL ONLY SHIFT TO CFC IN THE EVENT OF HOSTILITIES AND FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF THE U.S. COMMAND AUTHORITY. HOWEVER, OPCON OF SOME MINOR U.S. ELEMENTS, TWO STRIP ALERT AIRCRAFT AND U.S. AIR

DEFENSE (SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE UNITS), HAS ALREADY BEEN VESTED IN THE CFC. THUS, AS IS NOW THE CASE WITH THE ABSENCE OF GENERAL VESSEY TO ATTEND THE SCM, CONTROL DEVOLVES UPON THE KOREAN DEPUTY COMMANDER. THEREFORE, THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS UNDER THE CFC STRUCTURE FOR DIRECT KOREAN OPCON OF U.S. UNITS. BOTH CINCUNC AND CINCPAC BELIEVE THAT THERE EXISTS SUFFICIENT U.S. PRESENCE WITHIN THE COMMAND CHAIN TO PREVENT ANY UNDESIRE EMPLOYMENT OF SUCH FORCES. HOWEVER, THE FACT OF WHO HAS OPCON MUST BE DULY NOTED.

3. GIVEN CURRENT LEGISLATION NOW ON OUR BOOKS, BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE CFC ESTABLISHMENT PROCEDURE BE REVIEWED AT THE SEVENTH FLOOR LEVEL TO INSURE THAT, AS WE SEE THE MATTER HERE, WE ARE ON FIRM GROUND FOLLOWING THE ESTABLISHMENT PROCEDURES NOW CONTEMPLATED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, MILITARY PLANS, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SEOUL06500
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780304-0703
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780723/aaaaasyl.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 16b2676d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 78 SEOUL 5892
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1894011
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMBINED FORCES COMMAND -- LEVEL OF APPROVAL R
TAGS: MPOL, PEPR, MORG, KS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/16b2676d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014